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Church of Scotland
Women's Association for Foreign Missions.

OUR WORK ABROAD.

1899.

THIS Association was formed in 1837, for "The Advancement of Female Education in INDIA."

In 1884 the work was extended to AFRICA, a Lady Missionary being sent to Blantyre as an Agent of the Association to work under the Foreign Mission Committee.

In 1888 CHINA was included in the work of the Association to the extent of a grant of £10 towards a Girls' School in Ichang.

Let us see in this year 1899 what progress has been made by the women of the Church of Scotland in these three fields.

1st. INDIA.—There are nine Stations where Lady Missionaries are at work, viz. :—*Calcutta, Madras, Sholinghur, Poona, Darjeeling, Kurseong, Sialkot, Gujrat, and Chamba.*

The work is carried on by means of :—

(1.) *Day Schools.*—The children attending the Schools are gathered each morning by a native woman, who takes them to school, remains there during school hours, and takes them home again. Only on such conditions will Hindu parents trust their children to the Mission Schools, to which, however, they are willing to send them for education, notwithstanding the fact, of which they are well aware, that the teaching at these Schools includes daily instruction in the Bible.

(2.) *Boarding Schools or Orphanages.*—The children taken into these Schools are mostly orphans or children of poor parents. The number has been augmented at some of the Stations in the last few years by the ravages which famine and plague have made in many Indian homes. Many of them are supported by friends of the Mission in India or at home, frequently by Sunday Schools. The girls in these homes learn to take part in household work, to sweep and make tidy the dormitory, to clean and rub up the cooking utensils, brass plates, water-jugs, etc. They take turns also in helping to prepare the curry and rice, which is their staple food.

(3.) *Normal Schools,* where the girls are trained

as teachers.—This is one of the practical results of Mission teaching, and it is one of the most encouraging to see girls pass out of the Training Schools to be placed on the staff of teachers in the Day Schools.

(4.) *Zenana Visiting*.—The children attending school are often the means of gaining an entrance to the Zenanas for our missionaries. Repeating at home their lessons and hymns and telling their Bible stories, they excite a spirit of curiosity, *perhaps* of unconscious spiritual longing, to hear these good words for themselves.

In some respects this is the most interesting part of the work, as it brings the missionary into personal contact with the women in their homes, though it requires also continual patience and a spirit not to be daunted by disappointments. Unexpected meetings, long after the visits have ceased, have sometimes shown that the Bible lessons have not been forgotten, and that the seed was being scattered in new homes and hearts.

And though a house is at times closed against the missionary, perhaps by the order of the master of the house from a sudden dread of the power of the "Book," our missionaries wait patiently in the hope (which is sometimes realised) that a message will come again, asking them to return. They will not enter a Zenana without the permission of the master of the house, and upon the understanding that the Bible is read at every visit.

(5.) *Itinerating*.—Where there are villages near the station the missionaries at certain seasons of the year form little parties, and with tents, and harmonium and magic lantern, encamp a night here and a night there, gather the women round them, and tell them of the Saviour. They usually meet with a friendly welcome, and the sweet hymns and the pictures of the scenes in the New Testament story tend to impress the truth on the minds of the simple country women.

(6.) *Medical Work*.—This branch of the Mission, begun at Poona under Dr L. C. Bernard in 1886, is carried on by dispensaries, attendance in Zenanas, and since 1892 by a hospital containing twenty beds and a few children's cots. At Gujrat also the medical work, which was begun by Miss Hester Russell, M.B., in the beginning of 1895, by the opening of a dispensary in a native house, has developed into a beautiful structure nearly completed, where twenty patients are to be accommodated under the superintendence of Miss Annie C. Smith, F.R.C.S.Ed. This has been made possible by the liberality of friends in Canada.

At Sialkot, under the Aberdeen Auxiliary, the Medical Mission is under the charge of Miss Rachel Mackenzie, M.B., who went out in 1896. Daily dispensary work is carried on, and the Medical Missionary visits patients in their own houses when sent for. Here also wards have been fitted up as a temporary hospital for in-patients till a suitable building is acquired.

No part of the Mission Work appeals more to Christian sympathy, than that which tends to alleviate bodily suffering while revealing the message of Christ's Gospel to those patient Hindu women, who have been shut out alike from relief of their bodily ailments and from the knowledge of Him who can give rest to their souls.

A few words as to our lately started Missions at Chamba and Kurseong.

(7.) *Chamba*.—Hitherto the female work has consisted of two girls' schools under charge of the missionary of the Church, and taught by native teachers. Now it is carried on by Miss Read and Miss Brown, who were sent out in 1895, and have settled down in the little mission house in the midst of the beautiful surroundings of that district. Besides superintending the schools, our missionaries visit the women in their homes, and have gained the friendship and confidence of many of them.

What an advance from the unique entry of the Rev. William Ferguson in 1863, when he went through the city, accompanied by two native catechists, reciting verses of Scripture as he went.

(8.) *Kurseong*.—Female Missions at this station are carried on by two missionaries. The Girls' Day School has a larger roll now than it has ever had, while the Sunday School is well attended by boys and girls. Zenana visiting goes on regularly with its fluctuations of success and disappointment—one gleam of brightness makes a missionary strong for many future efforts. As at other

stations, some of the women receive Bible teaching only, while at others secular instruction is given as well. Thus, at this quiet, secluded station, the gentle influence of the Gospel of Christ is overcoming the opposing foes of ignorance and superstition, and will manifest its power, it may be many days hereafter, in holy, Christian lives.

Such is the nature of the work in India, with variations according to the district and the customs that prevail.

2nd. AFRICA.—Three missionaries of the Association are at work here—at Domasi and Blantyre; and a bright and busy scene it is at both stations. The work is carried on under the superintendence of the Foreign Missions of the Church, and combines, with the ordinary routine of school work, instruction in industrial work to both boys and girls. A church has been built at Domasi, and there is the prospect of another church at Zomba, eight miles from Domasi.

If we could get a glimpse at either Mission Station for a day, we would see, first in the morning the gathering for worship, then the march to the school, where the older lads teach the younger ones; at another hour we find the boys busy at shoe-mending, at the printing press, and carpentry; the girls by the river side, hard at work at their washing, or in the laundry, learning to starch and iron, or in the dairy, which is a great success.

Besides the work at the station, the missionaries

visit the surrounding villages, meet the women, have a quiet talk, and teach them to sew.

3rd. CHINA.—The work of the women of the Church of Scotland here, which consists of three Girls' Schools at Ichang, has been superintended by the wife of the missionary of the Church. Now three young ladies from New Zealand are at work as the missionaries of the Association. May they be enabled, by the influence of their daily teaching and daily intercourse, to win many of their Chinese sisters to believe in the Christians' Saviour, and to enter upon the Christian life. C. R.

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